

NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

Presented by Jason P. Miller, Chief of Communications and Community Relations

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Department of Correction lifts flu season age-related visitation restriction

Dover, DE – The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) announces that, effective today, it has lifted the visitation restriction that had been imposed late last month on persons 16 years of age and younger as a precaution to protect inmates, staff and visitors during flu season. This measure was taken in response to an increase in flu-like activity in prison facilities and throughout the community and is part of ongoing efforts to minimize the spread of the flu virus. Due in part to the precautionary measures taken by the DOC, the number of inmates who have presented flu-like symptoms has dropped over the past week. As of February 12, 2020, 23 inmates across all Level IV and Level V facilities statewide are being observed by medical staff or are receiving treatment for the flu or flu-like symptoms.

Enhanced screening measures implemented last month for correctional security, medical and administrative staff who work in Level IV (work release and violation of probation) and Level V (prison) will remain in place while elevated flu activity continues in communities across the state.

[Click HERE to read the DOC's January 31, 2020 initial announcement of flu-related precautionary measures](#) to limit potential exposure to the influenza virus and reduce the spread of flu.

Under the leadership and direction of the Bureau of Healthcare, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, DOC sponsors a comprehensive flu vaccination effort across all facilities and offices. This year, hundreds of staff and over 1,750 inmates received the flu shot during vaccination clinics across DOC facilities. Inmates who present symptoms of the flu are carefully monitored by medical staff and may be given anti-viral medication and isolated in facility infirmaries. Prevention and control measures have helped the DOC avoid widespread flu outbreaks in all correctional facilities during the entire 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 flu seasons.

The DOC continues to strongly advise those who are feeling ill with seasonal flu-like symptoms to refrain from visiting a prison facility until their condition improves. Visitors should follow these guidelines:

Refrain from visiting when sick

Visitors play an important role in the support system for inmates, but the health and well-being of inmates, staff and visitors is a priority. If you exhibit symptoms of a cold, sore throat, or any

contagious disease, please refrain from visiting a correctional facility. Signs of the flu include fever, cough, sneezing, runny nose or a sore throat.

Get the flu vaccine

While it won't completely prevent the flu, the flu vaccine has been shown to lessen its severity and can protect children and the elderly from serious complications that can result from the flu.

Wash hands frequently

Visitors should clean their hands when entering and leaving DOC facilities. Washing your hands with soap and water often prevents the spread of germs, and can help prevent the flu.

Get more information about flu prevention and flu symptoms from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>.

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